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reasonings to be fallacious, as he finds them attributing the high course of exchange in Dublin, which was then at 17½ to 18½ per cent, to the excessive issue of bank paper, when now with a more extensive issue, it has not for a considerable time generally exceeded 10 per cent, and is at present about 8½ per cent; but he should recollect that at the time exchange was so high, the discount on notes was a great deal higher than it is at present. The alarm of invasion had the same effect here, which he says caused a premium on gold in England, and it must be admitted that these writers allowed that other causes operated to cause a variation in the rates of exchange, a balance of debt; this depends upon whatever country is debtor or creditor. In the debtor country the bills on the creditor country will be scarce, and of course, dear; the supply, as Mr. Foster expresses it, being universal as the demand; so that the state of exports, imports, and the number of absentees varies the state of exchange. This balance of debt has a known invariable limit, which is the expense of transmitting gold from one country to another, which Mr. Foster calculates at 2 per cent, and he says, that there has been annually a balance in favour of this country, of more than half a million, at the time that exchange was so high, so that a depreciation of notes must have caused the high exchange.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

THE TEN DAYS OF HAPPINESS.

THE following Narrative cannot fail of being acceptable to all lovers of Eastern learning; it is translated from an inestimable MS. in the Coptic tongue, found in the gallery of the great Pyramid at Cairo, by the Abbe Mirléton. The facts which it records throws new light upon a well known character, deservedly accounted the greatest of all the successors of Mahomet.

On a fine summer evening, towards the end of the month Ramdan, the Caliph Haroun al Raschid, attended by Giafar, his Vizir, and Mesrour, his chief Eunuch, all in disguise, took boat at the bridge of Bagdad. It is not unknown to the learned, that this Caliph was wont frequently to take such rambles. He ordered the waterman to row them two miles up the Tigris; "We'll go visit," said he, "Ebn Mulish Ben Hoost Ben Hobal Fung, the Philosopher. I am of opinion that philosophy is a very pretty pastime, when one is tired of tennis and cricket." Accordingly they landed at the garden of Ebn Mulish Ben Hoost Ben Hobal Fung, and found that famous man, preparing a bed for cucumbers, with straw and the dung of asses. He received them very philosophically, tossing his spade and bespattering them with his compost. "Friend Haroun," quoth he to the Caliph, "thou knowest I have no high opinion of thy noddle. I have more than once told thee so, civilly as in duty bound; for philosophy teacheth us humility and courtesy; the happiest hour of thy reign, was that in which I first condescended to honour thee with my familiarity; thou hast gained more sound knowledge from my conversation, than from the sermons of all the Imams in Bagdad; thou hast not in thy court my equal." "Except Aboul Junker, the rope dancer," said the Caliph, "I know none." "Sacred pigeon of our holy Prophet," cried Ebn Mulish Ben Hoost Ben Hobal Fung, "let us not waste our most precious time in vain gabbling; here are idle spades; Commander of the Faithful, first of the human race, deign to take one. Believe me, your famous sword, Samsamah, with which you subdued so many nations, is not in the eye of philosophy a more estimable weapon; Giafar, thou shadow of majesty, here is another for thee; prime ministers have no right to disdain dirty work; and most venerable Eunuch, lo! a third for thee; thou art thyself but a most miserable vegetable, do what little good thou canst in thy generation."

The Caliph smiling, took the spade, his officers though not smiling, followed his example. For some minutes they tossed the dung about, silently and awkwardly. The Caliph little accustomed to the tasks of horticulture, soon felt his wind fail; and leaning on his spade, spoke thus to the philosopher, "I suppose, learned sir, you mean to give us a practical illustra-

tion of our Prophet's infallible doctrine, that human happiness consists in action?" Ebn Mulish Ben Hoost Ben Hobal Fung, answered and said, "Human happiness, what is that? I have travelled over all the East, but never saw it. At Aleppo, I conversed with two travellers, who boasted of having explored the Northern regions; one of them affirmed, that he had seen men perfectly happy; another made oath that he had handled a red hot snow ball. I took a staff and belaboured them both soundly. I sojourned for a season at the court of Seged, Lord of Ethiopia. A whim struck him of being completely happy on an island in the Lake of Dembea: he took every possible precaution for producing that blessed effect; yet those ten days brought forth nothing but vexation and misery; you shall hear how. On the first day"—"Body of me," quoth the Caliph, "after delving in asses' dung till I am out of breath, do you think I shall listen patiently to the history of ten miserable days? a pretty philosopher truly! besides, I know the story already, and I know moreover, that it shall be published to the world, in a language called English, by a man named Samuel Johnson, about the year of the Hegira 930, if Allah allows our world to exist so long. Do not marvel at my prophesying so punctually. Am not I the representative of the great Prophet?" "Be that as it may" replied Ebn Mulish Ben Hoost Ben Hobal Fung, "I hold the attempt of Seged to have been presumptuous and absurd, and I hope it will be a warning to all succeeding generations; that no man hereafter may, presume to say, this day shall be a day of happiness." "Aye," said the Caliph, "and here is Mesrour, who to my knowledge, hath attended to your philosophical discourses these three years, yet is no philosopher; and I hope it shall be a warning to all succeeding generations, that no man may hereafter presume to say, I will be a philosopher. Darii, Ferio, Baralipton! what sort of argument call you this, with regard to the disappointment of Seged, in his scheme of happiness? I can only say, that good and bad luck are dealt about after such measures as neither you nor I can fathom. He projected for himself ten happy days, and each of them failed; why then lament, therefore? but this woful tale concerns not me; 'tis past and gone. Futurity is to us a non-entity; we may carve it out as we please—and I this moment declare—that in spite of Seged and all his lamentations, I will be happy for ten days to come."

"Very well," said the Philosopher, "and pray what scheme do you propose for to-morrow's happiness?" "None?" replied the Caliph, "scheming was the rock on which your friend Seged wrecked his venture of felicity. He conceived projects; they miscarried, and he was miserable. I will transfer the toil of invention, and the chagrin of disappointment to others. Giafar, be it your charge to advertise my trusty friends, Isaac Ben Phiddal and Jacob Ben Bottal, of my purpose. Let them be constituted masters of revels for the ten ensuing days." "Nonsense," cried the philosopher, "if you will not listen to sound reasoning let us try, what *sound reasoning* can do. I bought a boy the other day from a rascally grinning Jew. What ho! Arassid; he sings well, and tickles a lute right cunningly. Now I have given him a song to conn, quite suitable to our present topic. I love mightily, and upon every occasion, to rail at this world and all things in it." Arassid then approaching with a timid and diffident air, seated himself on a green bank, and having played some flourishes on his lute, warbled with infinite grace these verses:

DELUSIVE all and vain are human joys,
The young unhappy Selim sighing said;
As to the midnight sky he raised his voice,
Wild wandering in a dark and heathy glade.
What is there real to man, alas! but pain!
And what of joy that proves not false and vain.

This soul, the breath of heaven within us plac'd,
That moves and feels all o'er our wondrous frame,
With energies divine enriched and grac'd,
Why could it never yet remain the same?

Eager each bliss in nature's bounds to drain,
And then to spurn them all, as false and vain.

Heroes, and ye that drench the world in blood,
Conquerors, enamour'd of bright empire's blaze,
That gleams through clouds afar in frantic mood,
Wasting in fields of toil your noblest days,
Soon, though ye grasp the universal rein,
Soon will ye, weeping, quit a task so vain.

See yon gay travellers, in the massy hall,
Secure from night and storm, all decked in smiles;
For wine, for jest, and song, by turns they call,
But varied luxury all thought beguiles;
And if by chance another day they gain,
With rueful face they'll curse their orgies vain.

Sunk on a couch of silk, Zemindar lies,
On Zara's bosom lull'd, clasped in her arms,
He wakes to transports new, he fiercely flies,
And rifles unopposed her glowing charms:
Sure that is bliss—let him but sleep again,
And waking he'll confess this false and vain.

Ev'n ye who boast this passion to refine,
From the low dregs of gross mortality,
Who dream of pants, and sympathies divine,
Th' angelic feeling, and respondent sigh,
Still the same grov'ling period must obtain,
Made by your art more exquisitely vain.

The sage that weighs the stars in his proud thought,
And to their circling worlds of light gives law,
Quick from that daring flight, by hunger brought,
Obeys the cravings of his carnal maw.
To pye and pudding, from th' Etherial plain,
How vast the fall, and the ascent how vain.

Yet wisdom, love, wine, glory, each poor wight,
That treads this earth, infatuate must pursue;
Blest only when the race is done, when night,
The night of death, removes them from the view,
To shades where sleep and sweet oblivion reign,
Unbroken by such hollow phantoms vain.

Blest moment, that shall wrap my heart in peace,
By hope and disappointment torn no more,
When this flat, stale, dull, scene to me shall cease,
And I some happier region may explore;
Not the vast globe itself could tempt me then,
To tread once more a tract so false and vain.

During the song, the Caliph showed no small emotion, and gazed with eagerness on the tuneful Arassid. At the conclusion he said to the philosopher, "your boy is a delightful creature. He is qualified to sing in Paradise; and if I find no worse there I assure you I hope for no better. Never before did I hear an air so enchanting, set to such good for nothing verses; so my faithful friend, good night." The philosopher conducted his visitors to the river's bank, and promising to be at court next morning, with a solemn benediction, bade them adieu.

As they rowed gently down the Tigris, the Caliph raved about the singer Arassid; his supple attendants echoed his opinion, in the language of exaggerated and fulsome adulation; which far from pleasing him, seemed nauseous and disgusting, when he compared it with the familiar address, and unrestrained contradictions of honest Ebn Mulish.

When he arrived at the palace, the night was far advanced; he immediately retired to his chamber and ascending the alcove, wished for profound sleep, but he wished in vain. The song he had heard, and the singer, perpetually haunted his fancy. He made the signal for the musicians in the antichamber to play, hoping their soft strains, as they had often done, would lull him to repose. This expedient produced no better effect; the softest touch of their lutes seemed harsh, the silver wires of their harps, scarce trembling, brayed rough in his ear; and the song, though one which before had enchanted him, now only enchanted by recalling to his

mind, the voice of Arassid. He commanded them to cease; and was about to deliver himself a prey to chagrin, when he suddenly reflected that he possessed within himself a power of self-accommodation, and that in the conscious possession of this power more than in all his state, his own superiority consisted. "Shall I," said he, "imitate the silly girl, who the other day, cried herself into a fever for the loss of a nightingale! Except the divine Zorayma, whom I heard on the banks of the Teflis and whom I never can forget, Arassid certainly excels all mortals. But a singer more or less shall not break the repose of Al Raschid." This happy reflection induced a pleasing self-complacency, which was quickly followed by refreshing sleep. He was waked by a loud noise in the antichamber, caused by a contention for the mastery between Isaac Ben Phiddal, and Jacob Ben Bottal, each claiming the right of regulating the happiness of the day, and each proposing a different scheme.

The arguments with which they supported their respective rights of priority, made the Caliph laugh heartily. He forthwith summoned the whole court to attend in the great council hall, and ordered the contending parties to plead their cause at large. The previous question, who should plead first was determined by lot, in favour of Isaac Ben Phiddal. That eloquent gentleman then held forth his right of precedence, in a speech of five hours and forty minutes: at the conclusion of which, Jacob Ben Bottal, being called upon to reply, was found fast asleep. After yawning and stretching himself, he pronounced emphatically these words, "brethren let us go to dinner." The hall resounded with a thousand shouts of applause, and every voice proclaimed the victory of Ben Bottal. The morning thus passed happily, because busily; a day of employment can hardly be unhappy.

The Caliph passed the night calmly, though not without a dream of Arassid. He fancied he saw that youth, in a woman's dress, singing and playing an air of most bewitching tenderness; his brow bound with roses, and his eyes sparkling with pleasure. The lovely vision eluded his grasp, vanished with a smile, and left him half-waking in voluptuous melancholy. He arose, and according to custom, went to prayers. As he returned from the mosque, he was astonished to hear an inconceivable variety of musical sounds at once fill the air; he looked around and saw his attendants, his guards, the people in the streets, in the windows, and on the house tops, all performing on musical instruments. He turned to enquire of Giafar what this meant, and beheld that able statesman grinning ruefully, and twanging a Jew's-harp between his teeth. He next applied to Mefrour; the Eunuch answered by a flourish on a child's whistle; Ben Phiddal played on a rebeck; Ben Bottal on a rebible, and the Philosopher Ebn Mulish himself sounded a mighty ram's horn; in short he heard cornets, sackbuts, dulcimers, marrow-bones and cleavers, psalteries, tambours-de-basso, and piano-fortes, nor could he divine the cause of this musical uproar, till he reached the gate of the palace and perceived an edict which Isaac Ben Phiddal had fixed there; importing that whoever during nine days, should appear in the presence of the Caliph, without playing on some instrument of music, should be set in the stocks; the absurdity of this device amused him for a while. In the evening, having previously sent to take down Ben Phiddal's edict, he supped in public with the court; contentment and good humour presiding over the repast. This night, in a dream, he saw Zorayma, the Circassian princess, of whom three years betore he had been deeply enamoured. She appeared more beautiful than ever, but with her former coldness rejected his vows, even when in the ardour of passion, he offered her the rank of sole Sultana. She told him that she could not be; for though he took her for a princess, she was in fact no more than the daughter of his friend Ebn Mulish Ben Hoost Ben Hobal Fung. At this whimsical information he burst out a laughing, and awoke. Jacob Ben Bottal now took his turn, as president of the third day's pleasure; he being a man of profound thought,

was much puzzled what course to take, he had risen early, and seating himself on a bench, by the gate of the palace, entered into profound meditation, in which he continued for many hours without coming to any certain result. His mind was wholly divided between two plans, whether he should order the most famous orators and poets to entertain the public by a display of their talents, or issue an edict commanding the whole court to engage in a general game of blind-man's buff. The Caliph whose disposition was naturally gelastic, being informed of this important decision, almost split his sides laughing. Composing himself by degrees, he went into a balcony to behold the sport, which was exhibited in the inner court, and continued, with uninterrupted expressions of satisfaction until sunset. On the fourth morning, Isaac Ben Phiddal undertook a magnificent plan of happiness. He proposed that the Caliph should make a triumphal progress through the city, accompanied by the chief personages of the court, but especially by Ben Phiddal himself, who should be the principal figure in the procession; he affirmed that such a show would make all the shopkeepers and petty artizans completely happy; and of consequence communicate by reflection, the most supreme delight to the Commander of the Faithful himself; accordingly this parade began immediately after noon prayers. The Caliph rode first on a mule, Ben Phiddal followed in a superb litter, from whence he declaimed to the people on each side, standing up, extending his arms and exhorting them to be as happy as he was. Along two or three streets he continued this mode of exhortation, still affirming strongly that he himself was happy, and perhaps many people believed him: but at length the vehemence of his affirmation seemed to abate, his voice faultered, and divers uncouth contortions took place in his countenance. He sat down wriggling and fidgeting; a furlong further, he owned he was unhappy; three yards more he roared that he was miserable. The procession now ended. The hero descended from his litter, bolted into the back yard of a caravansera and disappeared. The Caliph was at first alarmed, but observing Ben Bottal tittering aside, and recollecting that he had seen him give his rival a glass of Sherbet, just before they set out, he presently comprehended the matter. The misery of Ben Phiddal had a speedy and happy conclusion; he soon returned, but refused to renew his parade, and retired in dudgeon to his apartment in the palace. He had now no other employment but to contemplate the innumerable casualties which lie in ambush on every side to intercept the happiness of man, and break in upon the hour of tranquillity and delight. But his private calamity proved a public advantage, and furnished matter of merry speculation for the remainder of the evening. Next day for lack of better invention, Ben Bottal resumed his abandoned design of exhibiting the orators and poets. For the encouragement of candidates, he proposed prizes of value, withal reserving to himself the office of supreme judge. After a vast number of competitors had displayed their abilities; Ben Bottal assigned the prize of rhetoric to a man, who possessed the astonishing faculty of communicating his sentiments on the most abstruse subjects, though born dumb; and the poetical prize he awarded to a cobler, whose verses were indeed very indifferent, but it was proved that he had written them with the point of his awl. This cobling poet received his reward with the most ridiculous affectation of dignity, saying, "I pocket your money, but I care not a fig for your patronage; I was bred to the last, and am independent." In the evening the Caliph reclined on a sofa, amusing himself with the sage decisions of Ben Bottal, when the philosopher Ebn Mulish entered the chamber. "Welcome, Doctor," said the Caliph, "you see we come happily on." "O yes," said Ebn Mulish, "half your time is past, but yet you have no reason to exult. Reflect how much of your happiness has resulted from the follies and absurdities of our fellow-creatures; reflect how much more of it has resulted from mere chance, then tell me what part of it you can call your own work?" "The causes of happiness," replied the Caliph,

"or of pleasure, which is the same thing, will seldom bear a minute scrutiny; I shall be satisfied with myself if I can make the best of things as they occur, without diving in search of unnecessary knowledge. Life, says the great prophet is a stream; if so, let me be a cork or feather, let me slip merrily down the dancing waves, and kiss every flower that blooms on the margin: better thus, than like a block or stone, roll along below, tumbling in cold and darkness." At these words, Ebn Mulish threw his arms around the Caliph's neck, and in a tone of solicitude, asked, if no unsatisfied wish had disturbed his five days' happiness. "Ah! yes, I wished for Arassid and I dreamed of Zorayma!" The philosopher stept to the door, and returned leading the lovely apparition which had haunted Al Raschid's dreams—"Here is Arassid—here is Zorayma! take her from a father's hand, I hope she will secure the remaining five days of happiness. Be not amazed noble prince the: Sultan of Circassia, hid in this disguise, has long studied your character. I saw your attachment to my daughter with pleasure, but wished to know the man thoroughly who should possess Zorayma; with her I took a secret journey, and settled near your court, forcing myself by affected bluntness on your notice. Now I know you, and once more take her. But O! Al Raschid, let not this vast accession of felicity disturb that happy, that philosophic serenity which I see you possess. Never think of yourself independently; nor dream, that because you are the greatest man in Bagdad, you are the second being in the universe. What is the universe, and what art thou? Commander of the Faithful is a pompous appellation; but who are the faithful? A handful of two-legged insects, crawling in a corner of a paltry planet, called the earth. The annihilation of a thousand earths, with all their inhabitants, would make no blank in the universe. Examine the boundless skies; new suns at times appear there, with worlds revolving round them, inhabited by myriads of creatures rejoicing in their light. For some centuries they beam in our heavens, and increase our nocturnal canopy, till the fatal night arrives which the hand that formed them had marked for their extinction. The astronomer then looks in vain for them; the radiant orbs are vanished, their systems left in darkness, or hurled into confusion, and all animation there for ever lost. What is man?"

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ACCOUNT OF THE AFRICAN INSTITUTION.

(Concluded from Page 354. No. V.)

THE Committee, after describing the state of society which had been produced in Africa by a trade calculated to destroy all confidence, to engender hatred, and spread desolation, observe:

"In such a dreadful state of society, what success could rationally be expected in any attempt to promote agriculture or legitimate commerce? The attempt was obviously hopeless; and even if there existed no other assignable cause for the small progress made by the Sierra Leone Company, in meliorating the condition of Africa, this seems to furnish a satisfactory solution of it.

The Committee, however, are desirous of cautioning the friends of the Institution against expecting any very great effects to be immediately produced, even by the cessation of the Slave Trade. Africa, exhausted by the expiring struggles of that ruinous traffick, may for a time be incapable of much exertion in other directions. On the coast especially, where the operation of the Society must commence, the population is so greatly thinned, by the excessive demands which have been made upon it, as to place very considerable difficulties in the way of the general diffusion of knowledge, and the general excitement of industry. Large districts in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, which, ten years ago, were comparatively populous, are now reduced to wastes, with hardly a trace of their former culture; and if an estimate were to be made of the existing population, for about seventy or eighty miles inland, on that district of coast which extends from the Rio Grande to Cape Palmas, with the exception of one state where some degree of security and improve-